

MISUSE

Written by

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A teenager denied the opportunity to attend college grapples with a rocky home life, but discovers the euphoria of pain medication. Trapped in a cycle of self-isolation, he is forced to reckon with his addiction in solitude.

FADE IN:

1 INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY 1

DALTON (18) and FINLEY (16), side by side at the urinals. To their left, a stall door gently swings open. Dalton flinches.

FINLEY
The school isn't haunted, Dalton.

DALTON
What about that one kid?

FINLEY
Yeah...

DALTON
You see that door move?

FINLEY
Yeah?

DALTON
That's Atlas. Heard he died in this bathroom, too. Gives me the creeps.

FINLEY
You're full of shit man.

DALTON
Oh yeah? Pay attention to the temperature drop. You can feel him.

2 EXT. BRENNAN'S HOUSE - DAWN 2

Two-story, old, white house. Deteriorating look: grimy, chipped paint. Needs a power wash.

INT. BRENNAN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

BRENNAN (18) splashes water on his face and then looks up at himself in the mirror. His bathroom is grimy: old shower curtain, shitty cabinets, one dirty towel. It's a mess. His shirt sleeves fall over his wrists. His eyes are puffy and red. He looks tired. He stares at himself. Sad.

3 EXT. FINLEY'S HOUSE - DUSK 3

Classic brick house. Three floors and a chimney. Looks homey.

INT. FINLEY'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Brennan, Dalton, and Finley all sit around a pile of snacks on the floor, passing around a weed pen, indulging in the junk, red-eyed.

DALTON
God I'm so fucked.

FINLEY
Don't say that, you still have time. Isn't there a tournament on Sunday?

DALTON
200 fucking dollars to enter. Can't swing that. I'm probably gonna have to take a fuckin' gap year.

BRENNAN
Traveling would be nice, though.

FINLEY
Yeah, I can't wait to be far, far away from my parents.

BRENNAN
I wish I could.

FINLEY
You're not going to Pitt?

DALTON
His parents can't afford it.

BRENNAN
Yeah, my dad's surgery really did them in.

FINLEY
So what?

BRENNAN
Blew my college funds.

FINLEY
Oh, god, can you apply for aid?

BRENNAN
Mom said no. Like, hard no. It's too risky, apparently.

Dalton and Finley look at him awkwardly, unsure of what to say. Brennan starts to zone out as they resume CHATTING, the sound of his friends' voices distorting around him.

DALTON

Brennan.

BRENNAN

Yeah?

FINLEY

You good?

BRENNAN

Yeah, course.

4 EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

4

Brennan walks home from Finley's, picking at the skin on his fingers. His right thumb starts to bleed and he sucks the blood clean off.

5 INT. BRENNAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

5

Brennan walks through his front door and locks it, setting his backpack down. There's a note on the inside of the door: *"Took late shift at hospital. See u in the AM"*.

Brennan lets out a deep sigh.

INT. BRENNAN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the kitchen, nursing his thumb, and rifles through a few drawers. He eventually opens the right one and picks up a box of Band-Aids. Behind it sit miscellaneous pill bottles. Brennan considers them. He grabs one, studies it, then puts it back down. He picks up another one, turns it around, and traces his finger over the label.

Then, he opens it, pulls out two pills, swallows them, places the bottle back into the drawer, and shuts it.

INT. BRENNAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE: HAZY AND SLOW

...Brennan is moving around his room.

...Rubbing his eyes.

...He lies down on his bed.

...He is completely still.

6 INT. BRENNAN'S BATHROOM - MIDDAY 6

Brennan spits toothpaste into his sink before splashing water onto his pale face. He never looks in the mirror.

7 INT. FINLEY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT 7

Dalton tears into a bag of chips, CRUNCHING loudly as Finley hits the pen. Brennan clears his throat.

BRENNAN

I uh-I found some pills last night.

Beat.

BRENNAN (CONT'D)

In the kitchen. They're my Dad's.

DALTON

Um... you take one?

BRENNAN

Yeah.

Their conversation has an awkward, slow pace.

DALTON

Well, did you bring them?

Brennan tentatively nods and takes them out of his backpack.

DALTON (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

Brennan cradles the bottle in his right palm. Dalton gestures for them. Brennan obliges. Dalton eventually cringes and puts them down.

DALTON (CONT'D)

This is intense shit, man. I don't know if you should be messing around with painkillers.

FINLEY

You *definitely* shouldn't be.

The boys look at him in shock.

FINLEY (CONT'D)
Remember Atlas?

Everyone goes quiet.

DALTON
Do you see what we're getting at?

Brennan nods, embarrassed. Dalton puts a hand on his shoulder.

DALTON (CONT'D)
Just looking out for you, man. Weed is one thing, opioids are a whole other beast.

Brennan looks uncomfortable.

8 INT. BRENNAN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

8

Brennan goes to put the pills back in the drawer and returns to his room.

INT. BRENNAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He lies in bed restless. He goes over to the mirror, looking sternly at himself. He slaps his face a few times.

BRENNAN
Stop it, stop it, stop it.

He flops down on his bed, rustling around furiously, desperately trying to get comfortable. He rips his sheets off, walks out his bedroom door.

INT. BRENNAN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He hurries over to the familiar drawer, grabs the pills, and takes one.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

...Brennan struggles to make it through school
...He's sweaty and twitching, constantly checking the clock
...He rushes home, necks a pill or two, and sleeps
...The cycle repeats, over and over and over

9

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

9

Brennan bursts out of school, rushing home when Dalton and Finley intercept him.

DALTON

Brennan!

Brennan walks faster.

DALTON (CONT'D)

Brennan! Hey! I'm talking to you!
Hello?!

Brennan stops, turning slowly to face his friends.

BRENNAN

What do you want?

DALTON

Where are you going?

BRENNAN

Home.

Dalton walks closer to him.

DALTON

You look like shit. What's going
on?

BRENNAN

Nothing. I'm just going home.

DALTON

What, so you can take a few more
pills?

FINLEY

Dalton-

DALTON

No, no, let me get this straight.
You've been blowing us off for
drugs? Are you serious?

BRENNAN

I-

DALTON

You know change isn't supposed to
be easy, right? It's hard. I'm
dealing with it. Finley's dealing
with it.

(MORE)

DALTON (CONT'D)

You're just fucking stalling. If you wanna throw away any chance at a future, you know what? Be my guest. You're bound to be a fuckup with parents like yours.

Brennan looks furious. Dalton went too far. He looks at Dalton for a second before turning heel and walking back into school.

FINLEY

That was harsh.

Dalton looks at Brennan and sighs.

DALTON

He needed to hear it.

Beat.

FINLEY

I'm not sure he did.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brennan goes straight for the pills in his backpack. He holds the bottle shakily. He looks at the stall behind him before walking over to the toilet, holding the pills above the water. Just as it looks like he's gonna drop them, he pulls the bottle back into himself, opening it and taking three pills. He moves back over to the mirror, staring at himself in disgust. A tear slips. He backs into a stall, shutting the door. He sinks down to the floor and takes three more, and three more...

JUMP CUT TO:

10

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

10

FINLEY (O.S)

Brennan? You in there?

Finley pushes open the bathroom door. Silence. Finley slowly walks toward a stall. He can see Brennan's legs. He knocks on the stall door.

FINLEY (CONT'D)

Brennan?

Silence. Finley steps into the next stall over and gets up on the toilet. He gets up on his toes and slowly peers down into Brennan's stall. He lets out a guttural scream.

11 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

11

The walls are decorated with "Welcome Back!" banners. Finley walks down the hall alone, quiet chatter surrounding him.

SCHOOL BOY 1
Are you joking? I'm not taking a
piss in that bathroom. No way.

SCHOOL BOY 2
What? You scared of a few druggies?

SCHOOL BOY 1
Dead ones, yeah!

Finley looks nauseous.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He walks into a bathroom and vomits up his breakfast. He slowly gets up and walks over to a sink, splashing water on his face. He looks into the mirror to see two stall doors pushing open slowly behind him.

CUT TO BLACK.

END